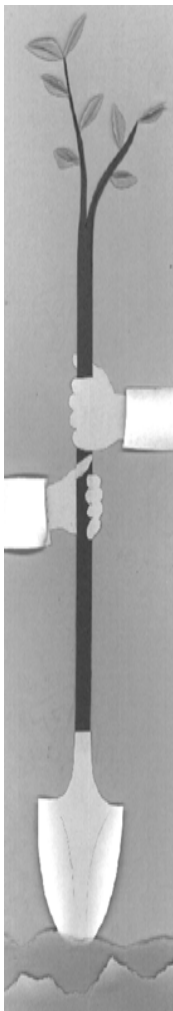


# How To Plant A Tree

There are many reasons to plant a tree. You may want to plant a tree for future wood production, shade, wildlife habitat, fruit or nuts, windbreak or any number of other reasons. Your purpose in planting the tree will determine where the tree is to be planted and what species of tree will be selected. Care must be taken to select the correct tree for the site on which it is to be planted. Matching the tree with correct soil and light conditions will greatly increase its chances for survival. And consider the tree's mature size. Will the site provide enough room for the tree? And what about its root system? A tree's root system extends far beyond its crown, and most roots are within the top 12 inches or so of the soil. Is your planting site far enough away from structures such as buildings, sidewalks and underground utilities, so that the roots will not cause problems later? And what about overhead wires? A tree growing into power lines will eventually need extensive pruning or removal.



Once you have the right site and tree species selected, preparation of the area is important for good survival and fast, early growth. All existing vegetation should be removed from the immediate area where the tree is to be planted. A cleared area of bare soil at least 2 to 3 feet in diameter should be sufficient. Ridding the site of vegetation can be done mechanically or chemically. If herbicides are to be used to kill existing vegetation, be sure these chemicals are applied by someone who is familiar with proper application. To mechanically remove the vegetation, slice through and remove the upper layer of sod or other vegetation to a depth of 2 to 3 inches. Once the vegetation is removed, your tree is ready to be planted.

If you are planting tree seedlings, be sure to keep them in a bucket of water so that their roots will remain moist while planting. Dig a hole deeper and wider than the tree's root system, then insert the seedling and fill the hole loosely with soil, holding the tree vertically as the hole is being filled. Once all the soil has been replaced, gently firm the soil around the seedling with your foot. Don't stomp it—just press it firmly.

One caution when planting a seedling is how deep to plant it. If it is planted too shallow, some roots may become exposed as the soil settles. If it is planted too deep, much of the stem may be underground and the tree is less likely to survive. If roots are forced into the hole, this may cause the bottom of the roots to be facing upward, again lessening the seedling's chances for survival. A properly planted seedling should have the seedling root collar (which is the zone between the root and stem) even to

ground level. Once your seedling is planted and watered, Mother Nature should do the rest. You need not continue watering the seedling unless there is an extended period of dry weather.



If you plan to plant a larger tree, its root system should be in a ball of soil wrapped in burlap (appropriately called a “balled and burlapped tree”), or held in a container, called a “containerized tree”. You will follow the same general guidelines for planting a balled and burlapped or containerized tree that you would a seedling, except that your hole will be much larger. Again, your hole will be wider and deeper than the ball so that the soil around the ball will be loose. When the tree is lifted into the hole, be sure to lift it by the root ball, not the tree’s trunk. Once the tree is in place, cut and remove any wire or string that might be around the root ball, or the container if it is a containerized tree. It is not necessary to remove the burlap, as it will decompose; but it should be sliced open before filling in the hole. Begin refilling the hole with soil, watering it as you fill. Replace the soil up to the tree’s base just above the roots. Be careful not to plant the tree too deeply! As the tree is being planted, also drive any support stakes into the ground at the same time. Once the tree is planted, remove any wrapping or tape that might have been around the trunk to protect it during transport. To brace the tree, use wide strapping for support. Once braced, the tree should still be able to sway a bit.

When watering a newly transplanted tree, allow the water to run slowly until the soil is saturated. Continue to water about once a week, depending upon the amount of rainfall. Apply a 2 to 3 inch layer of mulch around the tree to help retain moisture and to eliminate the need for mowing around the tree.

